

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 12491

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, XF
SUBJ: IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS BAHRAIN

REF: TEHRAN 11995

1. DCM MET WITH MFA UNDERSECRETARY NADIM, WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY ON MOST RECENT SWING THROUGH UAE, BAHRAIN, AND SAUDI ARABIA, MORNING OF DECEMBER 19 FOR A RUNDOWN ON HIS TRIP WHICH WAS FURTHER FOLLOW-UP TO GULF FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN OMAN(REFTEL). NADIM CONFIRMED VISITS TO UAE AND BAHRAIN PROCEEDED MUCH ALONG LINES REPORTED IN ABU DHABI 3336 AND MANAMA 2127. HE SAID THAT UAE MADE IT CLEAR IT WOULD GO ALONG WITH ANYTHING SAUDI ARABIA DECIDED ABOUT CLOSER COOPERATION AMONG PERSIAN GULF STATES BUT THAT IT WAS NOT GOING TO GET OUT IN FRONT. REACTION TO IRANIAN PROBING ON THIS SCORE WAS MUCH THE SAME IN BAHRAIN. NADIM TENDED TO DISMISS DISCUSSION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN IRAN AND SMALLER GULF STATES TO BE OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE, NOTING THAT THIS IS REALLY A MATTER WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE.
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2. MOST IMPORTANT PART OF VISIT WAS, OF COURSE, SAUDI ARABIA, WHERE IRANIANS MET WITH PRINCE FAHD AND OTHER LEADING SAUDI OFFICIALS. IRAN PURSUED IDEA OF SECURITY COOPERATION AMONG GULF STATES, SUGGESTING THAT ALL OF THE LOWER GULF STATES AND IRAN REACH AGREEMENT, LEAVING DOOR

OPEN FOR IRAQ TO JOIN LATER IF IT UNWILLING TO JOIN AN ARRANGEMENT NOW. SAUDIS FELT THS WULD BE A TACTICAL MISTAKEE, FORCING IRAQ TO COME OUT AGAINST THE ARRANGEMENT AND THEREBY PRETTY WELL FORECLOSING POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT JOIN IN THE FUTURE. SAUDIS PROMISED TO SEND AN EMISSARY TO BAGHDAD TO TALK TO SADDAM HUSSEIN AND HAMMADI ABOUT THIS MATTER IN NEAR FUTURE.

3. NADIM SAID THAT QUESTION OF OIL PRICE INEVITABLY CAME UP AND WHILE DISUCSSION WAS VERY FRIENDLY, NEITHER SIDE COULD AGREE ON A COMMON POSITION, AS WE NOW ALL KNOW FROM RESULTS OF OPEC MEETING IN DOHA. NADIM DID NOT FEEL THAT THIS DIFFERENCE WOULD AFFECT OVERALL SAUDI-IRANIAN RELATIONS WHICH ARE CLOSE AND IMPORTANT IN MANY OTHER AREAS. WHEN ASKED ABOUT STINGING EDITIORIAL IN TEHRAN DECEMBER 19 MORNING PAPERS(BEING SENT USINFO), NADIM SAID THAT ATTACK WAS CAREFULLY COUCHED AGAINST YAMANI AND NOT AGAINST SAUDI GOVERNMENT PER SE. HE LEFT LITTLE DOUBT THAT EDITORIAL WAS OFFICIALLY INSPIRED BUT ADDED THAT WE WOULD NOT SEE ANY MORE ON THE SUBJECT IN THE LOCAL PRESS AFTER TOMORROW. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR SAW NIOC MANAGING DIRECTOR MANOUTCHEHR EGHBAL MORNING DECEMBER 19, EGHBAL HAD NOTHING TO CONTRIBUTE EXCEPT THAT NIOC IS "STUDYING" THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISIONS MADE AT THE OPEC MEETING. HE AGREED THAT THEDUAL PRICING ARRANGEMENT COULD WORK OUT DISADVANTAGEOUSLY FOR IRAN AND CAUSE A REDUCTION IN OIL LIFTINGS AND REVENUE AS WAS SEEN LAST YEAR FROM OTHER CAUSES.

4. FINALLY, NADIM SAID THAT IRANIAN PILOT IN HANDS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PDRY WOULD BE RETURNED TO IRAN TOMORROW, DECEMBER 20. HE CLAIMED THERE IS NO CONNECTION BETWEEN PILOT'S RETURN AND RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES OVER RECOVERY OF DESTRUCTION OF DOWPED PLANE. WHEN IT WAS NOTED THAT IRAN HAD TWO SHIPS IN THE GENERAL AREA, NADIM SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE MILITARY FRONT, CONFIRMING OUR IMPRESSION THAT GOI IS DEALING WITH THIS MATTER ON AT LEAST TWO TRACKS.
HELMS

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